

Reading the Career Lattice

The [Washington state career lattice for early care and education professionals and school-age professionals](#) supports quality training and degree attainment in professional practice.

At lower levels of the lattice, state-required training is reflected with options for state-approved training, college coursework and training written by the [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning \(CSEFEL\)](#), which focuses on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of children from birth to age 5.

Professionals also have the option of obtaining level advancement by joining the [early care and education state apprenticeship program](#) through Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. This program provides on-the-job training in selected child care sites while completing community college-level coursework in early childhood education at reduced tuition.

A Child Development Associate (CDA) is an individual who has successfully completed the CDA assessment process and has been awarded the CDA credential. The CDA National Credentialing Program focuses on the skills of early care and education professionals. It is designed to provide performance-based training, assessment, and credentialing of child care staff, home visitors, and family child care providers. [Learn more at the Council for Professional Recognition website.](#)

Degree attainment is acknowledged at higher levels of the career lattice with specific emphasis on completed college coursework in early childhood education and related fields. For more information on college opportunities, visit <http://checkoutacollege.com>

The education mastery column documents the final step of each of these broader levels including:

- Training in all of the core competency areas or an introduction to ECE college course.
- Completion of a statewide ECE credential.
- Completion of an associate's degree.
- Completion of a bachelor's degree.
- Completion of a graduate degree.
- Professionals can search for trainings through [MERIT](#) by core competency area and level of mastery to assist with progression on the career lattice.

About the Career Lattice

Some steps on the career lattice require specific numbers of ECE or school-age credits. Read about [ECE and school-age approved credits and related degrees](#).

Background information

In 2010, the [Professional Development Consortium](#)—a group of more than 40 agencies that support early learning—developed the first draft of the career lattice. The goal was to develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees that are aligned with the workforce knowledge and competency framework for early care and education and school-age child care professionals. The career lattice was designed to reflect training, education and career pathways that support professionals who support children birth through 18 years of age. The career lattice is a "living" document that will adapt to the needs of the field. We anticipate that professional development initiatives supported by Washington's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge award will strengthen our system and result in future modifications to the career lattice.